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C. BIRTH CEREMONIES.

As soon as the child is born the father or the Mulla repeats the "Bâng" in his ear "Allah Akbar" (which an Amîr, of the name of Mirza Khan, said was never again repeated in one's life!). Three days after the reading of the "Bâng" or "Namâz" in Gilgit and seven days after that ceremony in Astor, a large company assembles in which the father or grandfather of the newborn gives him a name or the Mulla fixes on a name by putting his hand on some word in the Koran, which may serve the purpose or by getting somebody else to fix his hand at random on a passage or word in the Koran. Men and women assemble at that meeting. There appears to be no purdah whatsoever in Dards land, and the women are remarkably chaste.* The little imitation of purdah amongst the Ranis of Gilgit was a mere fashion imported from elsewhere. Till the child receives a name the woman is declared impure for the seven days previous to the ceremony. In Gilgit 27 days are allowed to elapse till the woman is declared pure. Then the bed and clothes are washed and the woman is restored to the company of her husband and the visits of her friends. Men and women eat together everywhere in Dards land. In Astor, raw milk alone cannot be drunk together with a woman unless thereby it is intended that she should be a sister by faith and come within the prohibited degrees of relationship. When men drink of the same raw milk they thereby swear each other eternal friendship. In Gilgit this custom does not exist, but it will at once be perceived that much of what has been noted above belongs to Mussulman custom generally. When a son is born great rejoicings take place, and in Gilgit a musket is fired off by the father whilst the "Bâng" is being read.

* This is said to have no longer the case, except in those Dard republics, where foreigners have not yet interfered. In monarchical Yasin, and, above all, in Hunza, sexual laxity has ever been great. Where Sunni rulers have substituted dancing-boys for the dancing of men (formerly both men and women danced together), a worse evil has been introduced. A most sacred relationship is the one created by the foster-mother. The linguistic portion of "The Hunza-Nagyr Handbook," as also of Parts I. and II. of "Dardistan" answer the questions of whether and where polygamy, endogamy, etc., existed among the Dards, who, in appearance and sentiment as regards women, as also in legendary lore, are very "European," but whom invasion will convert into strict Mahommedans and haters of the "Firenghi."